

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Consideration of *Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment* (**Core Content for Assessment, contractor's version; Data on significant issues and their resolution; Data on the number of responses per content area and NTAPAA Feedback Summary under separate cover**)

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.6451, KRS 158.6453, KRS 158.645

History/Background:

Existing Policy. The General Assembly and the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) have established and implemented high standards for all students in Kentucky. KRS 158.645 and KRS 158.6451 set forth the capacities and goals that frame, along with the Academic Expectations, what students should know and be able to do as the result of their public education experiences. KRS 158.6451 further requires the Kentucky Board of Education to provide school districts and schools with "a model curriculum framework directly tied to the goals, outcomes, and assessment strategies related to KRS 158.645 and 158.6453 (Assessment of achievement of goals – Development of Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) Components – Assessment Design – Biennial plan for validation studies – Local assessment – School report card).

Based on these statutes, KRS 156.160, and 704 KAR 3:305, the Kentucky Board of Education established the *Program of Studies*, 704 KAR 3:304. The *Program of Studies* outlines the minimum content standards required for all students for the required credits for high school graduation and the content standards for primary, intermediate, and middle level programs that lead up to the high school requirements. These content standards are based on Kentucky's learning goals, Academic Expectations and national standards. In addition, the Kentucky Department of Education has defined the *Core Content for Assessment* for the Commonwealth's assessment and accountability program. The *Core Content for Assessment* was last reviewed in 1999.

As the Kentucky Board of Education defines the direction and technical specifications for the next request for proposal (RFP) for the Commonwealth Accountability and Testing System, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has the opportunity to review, organize, prioritize, clarify and align the content and performance standards for the assessment system. The context for this work is in light of research, scholarship and emerging national standards, such as the American Diploma Project, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Frameworks, standards required by ACT and SAT, standards set by national content organizations such as the National Council of

Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Science standards.

Work to Date

Staff received direction from the Kentucky Board of Education at the August 12, 2004, meeting to proceed with the steps necessary to ensure that Kentucky's content standards are defined appropriately as we move toward development of the next request for proposal for CATS. KDE is currently refining the *Core Content for Assessment* to ensure that the content statements are clear, well defined and organized in such a way to more positively impact teaching and learning.

Kentucky Department of Education staff has followed a series of steps and processes to refine, focus and clarify the *Core Content for Assessment*. First, staff considered these key questions:

- Kentucky educators have identified what students need to know and be able to do, through articulation of our current student standards. The question now becomes: What do *we* need to know about what *the students* know?
- How does one articulate the differences between the needed, intended, implemented, and assessed curriculum?
- What role does or should the state play in the articulation of assessments as opposed to the federal, district, or community roles?
- Is there a piece of core knowledge that everyone should know, and then a different set of knowledge that may be more specific to a career path or content major?

Next, (August-December 2004) small teams of KDE content consultants refined, clarified and reorganized an initial draft of the *Core Content for Assessment* for each content area. This work was guided by review and verification of alignment of *Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment* with national standards for each content area (e.g., National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council of Teachers of English), the American Diploma Project, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Frameworks, standards required by ACT and SAT, and standards set by other states (See Attachment A: Resource Documents list). During this process, KDE content consultants clarified the language of the content statements to better communicate what students are expected to know and be able to do, organized the content standards around big ideas within the disciplines, and began to define the depth of knowledge expected for each core content standard. Drafts of this work were reviewed and discussed with external content reviewers.

Third, KDE convened teams of Kentucky teachers (approximately 80), representing all grade spans and content areas, to review the Core Content for Assessment draft in January 2005. KDE used a specific protocol established by the National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment (See Attachment B: Protocol for Core Content Review). WestEd, one of our current contractors, assisted in the process. The Office of

Education Accountability staff attended the content teams as observers. The content teams focused on the following issues related to the *Core Content for Assessment*:

- Clarity and Appropriateness of the *Core Content for Assessment* statements
- Clarity of the grade span differences
- Expected rigor
- Coherence of the set of the *Core Content for Assessment* statements within each strand
- Cognitive Complexity/Depth of Knowledge across the set of *Core Content for Assessment* statements
- Instructional coherence of the entire set of statements
- Feasibility by grade level
- Developmental coherence
- Benchmark coherence
- Relationship with the *Program of Studies*
- Additional supports for schools including professional development needs
- Recommendations for the field review

As a follow-up to the work of the teacher teams, the *Core Content for Assessment* was revised and prepared for a broader field review using an online survey process. The Commissioner sent an email to all Kentucky teachers and administrators, as well as other key stakeholder groups, inviting them to participate in the survey. The online survey (Attachment C: On-Line Survey) provided stakeholders with the opportunity to respond to a series of questions for each Core Content statement. As of March 15, over 6,000 individuals had responded to the survey. Survey results were used to make additional refinements to the specific content standards and to prepare for the next phase of the work to determine the Distribution of Emphasis for the test blueprint design. Additional data will be sent to the Board under separate cover on significant issues raised by the survey and how these were resolved and on the number of responses via content area.

During the week of February 21, 2005, KDE reconvened the content specific teacher teams to begin the development of the test blueprint design using the Distribution of Emphasis process. Draft test blueprints were completed for each content area.

In addition to the work described above, KDE also convened a Mathematics Summit on November 17, 2004 and January 31-February 1, 2005. Participants included higher education mathematics faculty from arts and sciences and education, community college faculty, classroom teachers, superintendents, principals, district office mathematics specialists, guidance counselors, parents, business representatives, the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) representatives, and CPE Placement Policy Committee members. Participants provided feedback on the *Core Content for Assessment* and offered guidance on clarification of the content statements and alignment with postsecondary and workforce expectations. They also identified mathematical problems and tasks that illustrate each of the *Core Content for Assessment* standards. An additional follow-up meeting of the Mathematics Summit will be held in April or early May.

KDE continued to solicit feedback from the field during March, including the Instructional Supervisors Network (ISN), additional teachers and administrators at the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference, the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC), the Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC), the Superintendents Advisory Council (SAC), and other organizations.

Copies of the refined *Core Content for Assessment* documents (contractor's version) will be made available to Kentucky Board of Education members under separate cover from the Agenda Book. The *Core Content for Assessment* is now specified by specific grade levels as opposed to grade spans, identifies what students are to know as well as what they are expected to do with the content (depth of knowledge/cognitive complexity), and identifies the content for the state assessment and supporting content that is important at the local level for building the foundation for the state assessed content.

Policy Issue(s):

- Does the Kentucky Board of Education agree that the refined *Core Content for Assessment*, as presented, should serve as the foundation for the CATS assessment and move forward with the release of the Request for Proposals process?

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Keeping instruction focused on both the breadth and depth of content and student performance defined by the Kentucky Board of Education is essential in moving toward proficiency by 2014.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA)

The NTAPPA discussed the *Core Content for Assessment* refinement process at its March 10, 2005 meeting and addressed the following questions:

- Based on your professional experiences, professional standards, and knowledge of Kentucky's assessment and accountability system, what is your impression overall of the process used by the Kentucky Department of Education to clarify, focus, and organize the *Core Content for Assessment*?
- To what extent is this process valid and reliable?
- Based on your review of the revised *Core Content for Assessment*, how does the document compare to national standards and to model state documents?

Feedback from NTAPAA on the questions will be forwarded under separate cover. A summary was emailed to the NTAPAA Chair, James Catterall, for confirmation by NTAPAA members that these were the main points of their discussion. While the members agreed to the points verbally at the March 10 meeting, staff is asking for written confirmation to assure the Board of accuracy.

Instructional Supervisors Network
Teachers/Administrators at Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference
School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council
Local Superintendent Advisory Council (LSAC)
Superintendents Advisory Council (SAC)

The Board will be provided with a summary of the input from these groups.

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Date:

April 2005